



Community Review

Summer 2014

Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Washington State Department of Social and Health Services

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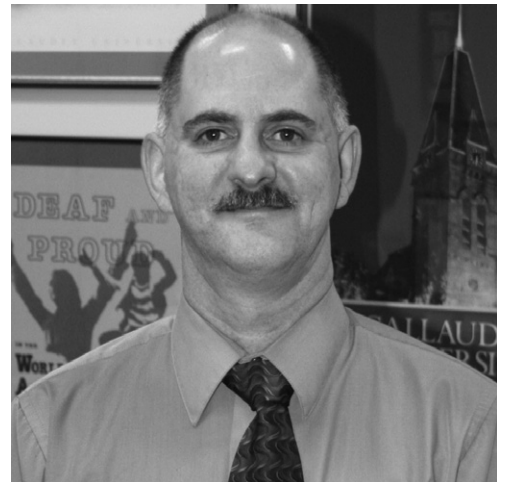
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Director's Message

Eric Raff, ODHH Director

As Director, one of my responsibilities is to steer the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) through its transition to the Aging & Long-Term Support Administration (AL TSA) and figure out how to shift certain administrative roles and responsibilities to AL TSA. With this change, I've already seen a shift that is allowing ODHH staff more time to focus on service delivery and streamlining of our internal operations. As part of the transition, ODHH may physically relocate to AL TSA's Headquarters office in Lacey, but timelines for that have not been finalized. I still do not know when ODHH office will be relocated to Lacey which could be another one or two years. I do not anticipate any further changes with staffing other than moving forward with two positions; a deaf-blind coordinator (formerly Assistant Director) and service integration specialist (formerly IT Network Specialist). I hope to finalize the positions, recruit and appoint prospective applicants by early fall. ODHH is now part of the AL TSA Strategic Plan yet we will continue to maintain a business plan. We have trainings scheduled for AL TSA headquarters staff to provide education regarding how to communicate with the deaf staff of ODHH and information about deaf culture. These trainings are being provided by Vicki Mosely, owner of Communication Works.



While becoming fully integrated with the Aging and Long-Term Support Administration, we continue to make progress with our programs, services and activities:

- We are projecting that we will spend all of the funds allotted to Washington State by the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) to administer the pilot National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution pilot program on a variety of needed telecommunication equipment.

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- With two new staff providing program support, we are catching up on valuable ODHH data and reporting.
- This summer, we are exploring the feasibility of distributing Apple iPads with Wi-Fi connectivity and specialized telecommunication software as a pilot project to low income applicants.
- We continue to make progress in looping DSHS offices (see Winter 2014 issue) which includes portable loops for Division of Vocational Rehabilitation offices.
- We now have our first online course for DSHS employees, “Working with Hard of Hearing Individuals” readily available with several more courses already under development.
- We have started preparing for a new contract to provide sign language interpreter services although we’ve had some challenges with the hourly rates.
- We will be working with the Washington State Association of the Deaf to provide a leadership camp to deaf youth, also known as “Deaf Teen Leadership” (DTL) camp, and another with the Washington State of Hands and Voices to provide guides to parents of deaf and hard of hearing children, also known as “Guide By Your Side” (GBYS).
- The success of three Foster Parent Recruitment information nights has prompted ODHH and Children’s Administration to host a few more in Spokane and Everett this summer.

Do you have a success story, advocacy issue, news, or want to share what matters most to you?

You can send articles via email to odhh@dshs.wa.gov or call 360-339-7382 VP for the ODHH Community Review Newsletter

Seattle Mariners Begin 2014 Season with Open Captions

This season, the Seattle Mariners join an exclusive group, becoming one of the few major league teams offering open-captions for all 80+ home games. Only about four or five other teams offer this service at their ballpark. All PA announcements are now captioned in right-field, just to the right of the center-field video screen and behind the Mariners third-base dugout.

This is a significant step forward for all of us in the various deafness and hearing loss communities. The Mariners are offering this to provide additional accessibility for all their events. I've been able to show this with four photos from our March 28, 2014 test. I took four photos: two with normal focus and two with close-up/zoom focus.

To implement the captioning system, the Mariners researched and worked with the Washington State Communications Access Project (Wash-CAP) and John Waldo, Attorney in the off-season. For more information about Wash-CAP, see <http://wash-cap.com>

The captions can be seen from any seat, most concession stands and lines behind the seats in the ball park, and provide a chance for us to see how public venues are using captions to help us enjoy the venue more and help us with understanding the announcements read over the PA system. If you know folks who have not attended a game, please take them to show them the captions. This is an especially good experience for the younger generation who have not gone out to see these events with captions. Kids with hearing loss and deafness should go to see these captions in action!

When you attend a game, please visit customer service or leave a note with the usher thanking them for captions. The ushers and customer service should take care of the input and pass it to the Mariner's management. It's important to show appreciation and support for these efforts as it encourages the Mariners and other teams and venues to support access and inclusion.

Success Stories of ODHH Contracted Services

Editor's note: With permission from two consumers who are Deaf-Blind, the following are success stories of ODHH- contracted services provided by the Deaf-Blind Service Center (DBSC). The stories were printed in DBSC's Pro-tactile E-News. The editor made additions to the story to help readers understand the services and technology available to people who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind.

Support Service Provider (SSP) Program: Support Service Providers, known as SSPs, serve as environmental and visual guides to people who are Deaf-Blind. A gentleman with Usher's Syndrome who uses tactile sign language uses SSP services for a wide variety of daily living activities, such as food shopping, mail reading, taking walks, running personal errands and receiving visual and environmental information. This gives him greater independence and the ability to make informed decisions. Having SSP services connects him to the world and the information highway. Having SSP services is a very important part of each Deaf-Blind person's life, enabling them access to all the information they need to stay fully independent.

Communication Facilitator (CF) Service: One female Deaf-Blind consumer's first language is American Sign Language (ASL) and communicating in ASL is much faster than communicating with a Text Telephone (TTY), an electric keyboard device used by Deaf people to make phone calls. Both parties must use a TTY to communicate via telephone or use a relay service and it is sometimes hard for the Deaf-Blind consumer to catch all the messages displayed on the TTY. Often, she has to ask the other person to repeat the missing message, even if the other party types slowly. When the consumer uses ASL, it means less misunderstanding and less doubt that complicates her understanding. CF services benefit her because she is Deaf-Blind and a standard videophone is inaccessible to her. During the phone call, the Communication Facilitator sits next to her and relays the message via tactile ASL. The Deaf-Blind consumer signs back to the other

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party. With a CF, the videophone is more accessible than using a TTY. Communication Facilitators are more reliable than using friends or family members to make calls for her.

If it were not for CF service, the consumer said she would” FREAK OUT!” She also is hesitant to ask friends, family, or advocates to make calls for her and would miss a lot in the call by not being able to ask questions and receive answers. She wants to be independent and making calls with a Communication Facilitator allows her that independence. CF Service is very important to her everyday living. She intends to ask that CF services continue forever!

Special Telephone Equipment

by Eileen Alter

We live in an age where most people take using the telephone for granted. At least several times a day, most of us use a telephone to call friends and family members, schedule appointments, place orders, and handle any one of a number of other tasks. A person’s inability to use a telephone due to a physical disability can often result in loneliness, isolation and a sense of increased vulnerability. With the proper assistive telecommunication equipment, many individuals can regain their independence.

If you or someone you know could benefit from adaptive telephone equipment, help may be available. To address this growing need, many states have programs which offer assistance to people who have disabilities that interfere with standard telephone usage. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, speech impaired, blind, or who have low vision, cognitive impairments, or restricted mobility, are often eligible to receive equipment that will assist them in using the telephone. These programs, commonly referred to as telecommunication equipment distribution programs, often provide qualifying applicants with free or low-cost devices to accommodate the user’s disability and improve their telecommunication access.

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The Telephone Equipment Distribution Program Association (TEDPA) is a national membership organization formed to support programs involved in statewide, or jurisdiction-wide, distribution of specialized telecommunications equipment for persons with disabilities. By providing a forum for these types of programs TEDPA participants exchange information and assist one another with program administration responsibilities. Internet links to many statewide program websites which provide information about available products and services can be found at www.tedpa.org.

Each state determines which devices are available, how frequently equipment can be replaced, and whether the equipment is on loan to or owned by the qualifying applicant. Most programs include devices such as phones with amplification and special dialing and answering features, TTY's, Voice Carryover (VCO) telephones, and ring signalers. Some programs offer more highly specialized devices, such as assistive speech devices, and provide qualifying applicants with individualized equipment training at a regional field office or in the recipient's home.

Application procedures and eligibility requirements vary widely from state to state. Many programs offer equipment to anyone with a disability which hinders their telephone usage. There are programs which restrict equipment provision to only those with certain disabilities and sometimes only to who are also from low income households. Proof of residency and disability verification is generally required. Some programs also require proof of residential phone service.

For information regarding a program that may be available in your state, visit the TEDPA website. Information may also be available from state public utility or service commissions (PUC or PSC) or agencies or councils providing services to individuals with disabilities.

Specialized telephone equipment may be the answer to helping you or a loved one use the telephone to stay in touch with the outside world and maintain the independence and freedom to live life to the fullest.

Welcome New ODHH Staff

Hello, my name is **Jennifer Woelke**. I am very excited to have joined the ODHH team as program support for Social and Human Services (SHS), Sign Language Interpreter Management (SLIM) and Information, Referral and Advocacy (IRA). I studied American Sign Language in high school through the running start program at South Puget Sound Community College. I completed 2 years of ASL instruction with Ray Bateh, while acquiring my AA Degree and High School Diploma simultaneously. I continued my education of Deaf studies at Western Oregon University. I completed a year there and am very thankful for all the amazing Deaf studies courses I was able to experience, including the study of ASL linguistics and Deaf history. I have spent the last 5 years working for a small locally owned company, centered on customer service and community. I enjoy running, bicycling on the tandem with my husband and growing fruits and veggies in my 3 gardens. I am pleased to be starting this new leaf in life and am very thankful and enthusiastic to be joining the ODHH team and working with our community members.

Hello to all our Washington communities and families! My name is **Lindsay Dubler** and I am excited to be joining the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing as a new Senior Secretary. I have been involved with the deaf and hard of hearing all my life, being a Child of Deaf Adults (CODA) with two deaf parents and a deaf older brother. There was always a lot of signing happening in the home and I have been fortunate to have my personal experiences synchronize with my professional goals. In 2010, I graduated from The Evergreen State College with my Bachelor's Degree in Business Development and Cultural Studies. Since then I have spent time as a Sign Language Interpreter in Washington and Montana and have worked with adults and children with developmental disabilities. I am thrilled to be joining the wonderful staff here at ODHH and look forward to serving our communities state-wide.

Hi My name is **Tabitha Jacques** and I am the new Assistive Communication Technology Program Manager. I am responsible for ensuring that our assistive communication technology resources are made available and being used! I am looking forward to working with people and organizations who need assistive technology in public and private spaces. I hope to expand the program in order to have people's needs readily met, so they can go about their daily lives without having to work for accessibility. I've lived in Washington D.C. for 13 years before finally uprooting and moving to the gorgeous Pacific Northwest along with my husband and four cats. Before I came into the Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing, I was an admissions counselor for Gallaudet University. I was fortunate to have traveled throughout America, meeting many wonderful young people and developing a better understanding of the challenges that deaf and hard of hearing students face in the education system. This sparked my desire to work more closely with the deaf and hard of hearing community, and to do something that improves the quality of people's lives. On a personal note, I have a deep love for the arts. On the East coast, I was a trained guide for the National Gallery of Art. I also worked closely as an ASL consultant for the Kennedy Center and other theatres in the D.C. area. I'm looking forward to doing something similar in the Pacific Northwest!

Editor's note: The Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) awarded client services contracts with to four non-profit Regional Service Center organizations in seven regions: Bellingham, Pasco, Seattle, Spokane, Tacoma, Vancouver and Yakima. Regional Service Centers provide the following services to Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind consumers and their family members: Case management services, education and training, outreach activities, loan of assistive listening devices, Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Demo Sites and access to public videophones. Deaf-Blind Service Center (DBSC) provides ODHH- contracted services statewide: Case management services and the Support Service Provider (SSP) Program. The following are narratives from Directors from of these non-profit organizations.

Cori Jones

Executive Director, South Eastern Washington Service Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (SEWSCDHH)

After four incredible years working at the South Eastern Washington Service Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (SEWSCDHH), I am sad to announce that I will be resigning as Executive Director.

My journey at SEWSCDHH started as an office assistant, transitioned into Interpreting Program Administrator, and then finally that of Executive Director. During the time I was able to work in the TriCity and Yakima service area I met some incredible people, completed an ITP, worked to maintain our State contracts and fix the building that means so much to us and the community. I learned and was able to succeed thanks to the Community – everyone's patience, caring, and friendly spirit really made my experience as incredible as it was.

I sadly leave SEWSCDHH as Director at this time, but for an important reason – my family. The support I have received for this decision has made a large difference, but it will still be hard to say goodbye to a Center and people that mean so much to me. I hope to stay involved in the community in some capacity – for sure volunteering for the Center when my new schedule allows. My last day is officially June 30th 2014

but I am staying on part-time while the SEWSCDHH Board is working hard to find a good, qualified applicant to replace me.

I want to thank everyone that I worked with for making my experience so incredible. I hope that this is not goodbye, but just farewell for the time being. My life has been greatly enriched and I am forever grateful for the opportunities I had to meet you all.

Dan Bridge

Interim Executive Director, Hearing, Speech & Deafness Center

I have been serving as Interim Executive Director of HSDC. Together, the Board, staff, and I have been working on strategic planning, the possibility of merger (it's not going to happen), separating the organization from 96 units of low-cost housing, contract compliance, staff morale and consolidation, development, board development, and budget.

My work at HSDC will continue, probably through October 2014 until a permanent replacement is found. The next items on my agenda include

- Board nominations (more diversity, more representation from the Deaf Community)
- Producing a new mission, based on what we've learned from numerous focus groups (donors, staff, Board, Deaf Community, general community leaders)
- Executive Director Search
 - *Once the new mission is set, the Board ED Selection Committee will search for qualified candidates for the position. Hopefully, a permanent ED will be in place no later than September 1, 2014, so I can work with that person on the next steps in the strategic planning process*
 - *If you know anyone who might be interested in the position, please have them contact me. I have a draft job description.*

It's been a privilege to work at HSDC, an organization with a great history and the promise of a healthy future – a future that will benefit the Deaf, hard-of-hearing and broader communities of Washington State.

Angela Theriault

Executive Director, Deaf-Blind Service Center (DBSC)

Angela Theriault is Deaf-Blind and currently works as the Executive Director of the Deaf-Blind Service Center in Seattle for two and half years. She has worked as an advocate, a case management and an educator both here and in Canada for many years. She has earned a BA in Psychology from Gallaudet University and an MA in Adult Education from Central Michigan University.

Deba Pietsch

Director of Southwest Washington Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (SWCDHH)

Born in Oregon City, OR, I was raised in Longview, WA most of my life. I attended the Washington State School for the Deaf (WSD) in 1978 at age 8 and graduated in 1988. After WSD, I attended Gallaudet University and graduated with Bachelors Art in Communication Arts in 1993. My very first job after Gallaudet was working for Communication Service for the Deaf in Sioux Falls, SD for 2 years as a Statewide Deaf-Blind Specialist. This was when I set my heart to be an administrator. However, I decided to pursue a teaching career after teaching ASL in several colleges for many years in Seattle area. Also, during my long career journey, I have been a client caretaker, research assistant, and teaching assistant. Finally, I received Masters of Science in Deaf Education at Texas Woman's University in 2007. After completing my MS, I taught High School English at Washington School for the Deaf for 3 1/2 years. Then, I taught ASL at Clackamas Community College in Oregon City, OR and Lower Columbia College in Longview, WA for a while. My passion was to become an administrator for a deaf center and realized my dream when I became the new SWCDHH Director.

Char Parsley

Executive Director, Nexus Inland

Char Parsley, director at Nexus Inland NW also known as Nexus, has been directing the center since 1999 when she first came on as a volunteer director for six months. She was officially hired March 8, 2000 when the center's name was Eastern WA Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. She is now celebrating her 14th year at the center. She is currently the only director since 2000 that has worked with ODHHS and has seen several changes occur at ODHHS and at the center and can be the historian when questions come up about either one. One interesting tidbit is that the first director in 1983 at the Spokane Deaf Center was Char's mother, Rebecca (Betty) Egbert.

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Free Matter
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